

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

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1. A system of software components, which can be invoked during runtime by an application program running under an operating system to display a parent and a child object, and wherein:
- if a background color of the child object is declared, the child object is displayed with the declared background color;
- if the background color of the child object is not declared, and a background color is globally defined for the system of components, the child object is displayed with the globally defined background color; and
- if the background color of the child object is not declared, and the background color setting is not globally defined for the system of components, the child object is displayed with the background color of the parent.
2. The system as recited in claim 1, wherein the object is part of a graphical user interface associated with the application.
3. The system as recited in claim 1, wherein the application program is written in Java programming language.
4. The system as recited in claim 1, wherein the system of software components is the Swing application program interface (API).
5. The system as recited in claim 1, wherein the operating system comprises a standard computer operating system such as Windows, Unix or OS/2.

6. The system as recited in claim 1, wherein the object is one of multiple objects within a layout associated with the application program.
7. The system as recited in claim 1, wherein the globally defined background color is independent of the operating system.
8. A method for color inheritance between a parent and a child object, which are displayed using a system of software components within an operating system, the method comprising:
- if a background color of the child object is declared, displaying the child object with the declared background color;
- if the background color of the child object is not declared, and a background color is globally defined for the system of components, displaying the child object with the globally defined background color; and
- if the background color of the child object is not declared, and the background color setting is not globally defined for the system of components, displaying the child object with the background color of the parent.
9. The method as recited in claim 8, wherein the object is part of a graphical user interface associated with the application.
10. The method as recited in claim 8, wherein the application program is written in Java programming language.
11. The method as recited in claim 8, wherein the system of software components is the Swing application program interface (API).

12. The method as recited in claim 8, wherein the operating system comprises a Windows, Unix or OS/2 computer operating system.

13. The method as recited in claim 8, wherein the object is one of multiple objects within a layout associated with the application program.

14. The method as recited in claim 8, wherein the globally defined background color is independent of the operating system.

15. A computer-readable storage device, comprising:

a windows-based operating system;

a system of software components within the operating system;

a parent object and child object, both created at runtime by an application running under the operating system, wherein

if a background color of the child object is declared when it is created, the child object is displayed with the declared background color;

if the background color of the child object is not declared when it is created, and a background color is globally defined for the system of components, the child object is displayed with the globally defined background color; and

if the background color of the child object is not declared when it is created, and the background color setting is not globally defined for the system of components, the child object is displayed with the background color of the parent.

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